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PRESS RELEASE

JRH
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THE OPTIONS FOR EAST TIMOR

Lisbon, 4 June 1998 – It has been reported by the Portuguese media and subsequently by some international news services that José Ramos-Horta supports "free association" or a "federated status" with Portugal for East Timor. What Mr. José Ramos-Horta did was simply to recall the UN General Assembly Resolution 1541 (XV) of 15 December 1960, which explicitly states that a referendum on self-determination offers the following options:

1) Independence;
2) Free association with the former colonial power (in the case of East Timor, Portugal);
3) Integration into another independent state (Indonesia).

In a referendum on self-determination, the people of East Timor will be able to vote for any of these three options, and do not have to be limited to chose between independence and integration with the Republic of Indonesia.

Mr. Ramos-Horta clarified in his remarks that if the people of East Timor were to chose an association with Portugal - with a large degree of autonomy as is now the case of the Portuguese Island of Madeira and the Azores - this would be a "sensible and intelligent choice" with obvious advantages for East Timor and the region.

Mr. Ramos-Horta never said that this is what he favours. Mr. Ramos-Horta's position as Vice-President of the CNRT is to unequivocally support the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination. In the event of a referendum in East Timor, he will actively explain, in an objective manner, to the people the advantages and disadvantages of all three options so that the East Timorese people can make an informed choice for their future.

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